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ABSTRACT

This document is the first of a series that will address five stages of the school reform process. It focuses on the first stage of the change process, managing key stakeholders and external groups and engaging them in the planning and development of the reform or innovation. A stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by an organization's attainment of its goals. Managing stakeholders is necessary for an organization to maintain focus on its goals, to function efficiently, and to achieve its goals. The following steps in the planning and development process are addressed: (1) engagement and recruitment of key stakeholders; (2) identification of major problems, concerns, and needs; (3) identification of obstacles, predisposing conditions, and enabling factors; (4) verification of subjective assessments with more objective data and information; and (5) prioritization and selection of the problem or need that the reform/innovation will attempt to remedy. Planning materials in this document are based on problem-solving approaches and implementation models developed in the health promotion/prevention field. Worksheets are included for stages of the planning process. (SLD)

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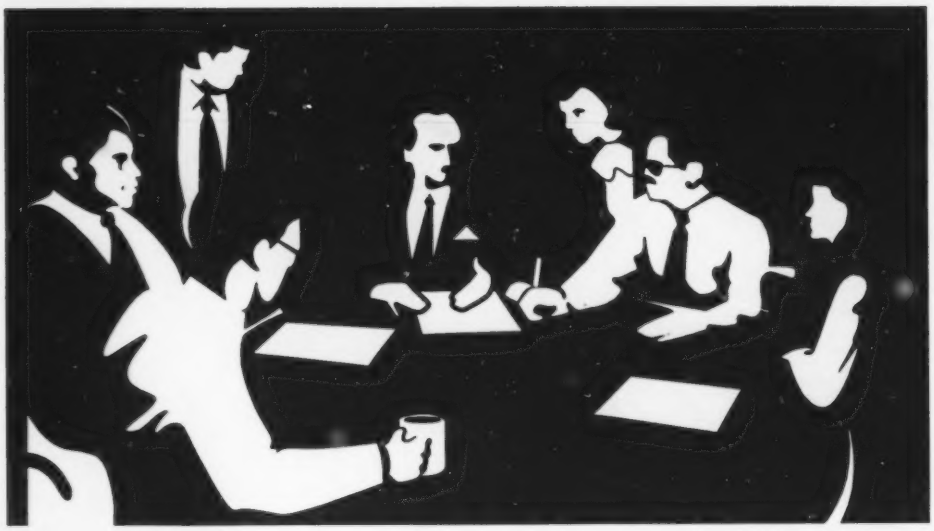

DEVELOPING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO SUPPORT SCHOOL REFORM

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Design by Marilyn Zimmers

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INTRODUCTION

Whether a district or school is embarking on a comprehensive, systemic reform process or simply designing an innovative program, the change process will include the following stages: (1) engaging stakeholders and external groups, (2) defining the problem or need that will be addressed, (3) implementing the reform/innovation, (4) monitoring implementation and evaluating interim effects and outcomes, and (5) sustaining the effects of the reform/innovation and institutionalizing changes in policies, programs, and practices. This document is the first of a series of publications that will address these five stages of the school reform process.

Developing Stakeholder Engagement to Support School Reform focuses on the first stage of the change process: managing key stakeholders and external groups and engaging them in the planning and development of the reform or innovation. The following steps in the planning and development process are addressed:

- Engagement and recruitment of key stakeholders
- Identification of major problems, concerns, and needs
- Identification of obstacles, predisposing conditions and enabling factors
- Verification of subjective assessments with more objective data and information
- Prioritization and selection of the problem or need that the reform/innovation will attempt to remedy.

The organizational perspective of school reform reflected in this document is based on the organizational theories and research on organizations and their environments conducted by some of the leading organizational theorists (Argyris and Schon, 1996; Grusky and Miller, 1981; Pfeffer, 1982, 1997; Pfeffer and Salanick, 1978; and Scott, 1995, 1998). The planning materials contained in this document are based on problem-solving approaches and implementation models developed in the health promotion/prevention field, which has a long history of designing innovations that involve stakeholders, volunteers, and community groups as key change agents (Altman, 1986; Goldfried and D'Zurilla, 1969; Green and Kreuter, 1991; McKnight and Kretzman, 1996; Matarazzo, Miller, Weiss, Herd, Weiss, 1984; and Murray, 1986).

OVERVIEW

Managing Stakeholders and External Groups

Who are the Stakeholders?

A stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by an organization's attainment of its goals, including:

Those with formal authority
Those with control over needed resources
Those representing key interest groups
Those with a high degree of influence over others
Those with a high degree of expertise
External regulatory agencies
Those who are knowledgeable about the school's history

Effective leaders are *pro-active* in their interactions with groups in the environment and negotiating relationships with those external groups who are key stakeholders (Roberts & King, 1989).

Managing stakeholders is necessary for an organization to maintain focus on its goals, to function efficiently and to achieve its goals.

In order for school reform to be implemented successfully, how stakeholders will respond and how their response will affect implementation of changes will need to be anticipated. Should a

stakeholder's response be uncooperative and likely to hamper implementation, then actions can be taken to avoid or circumvent opposition.

One of the most common obstacles to organizational change is that of self-interest of individuals and groups within the organizations and key stakeholders outside the organization. Most individuals and groups will act in ways that promote their self-interests rather than the goals of the organization (Roberts & King, 1989).

Because school reform and implementation of innovations may require changes in roles, responsibilities, and the exercise of authority, all those who are likely to be affected by change should be involved in the early planning phase. Who the key stakeholders are will vary depending upon the focus of the reform effort or the types of changes that will be made, i.e., in policies, programs, or practices.

By involving stakeholders in the early planning phase, their interests can be accommodated without losing focus on the primary reform goals and outcomes. Also, a common set of values and concerns can be promoted.

Change is usually view with fear—to overcome fear of change, a sense of urgency needs to be promoted—that is, that the consequences of not changing will be more negative than the consequences of change. Generating a sense of urgency is one strategy for getting stakeholders involved in the reform effort (Kotter, 1995).

How can Stakeholders' Interests be Managed?

Stakeholders' interests can be managed if leaders are willing to be pro-active in negotiating organizational priorities and goals to try to incorporate or accommodate their interests. In the event that their interests or concerns cannot be accommodated, then leaders can at least develop a strategy to deal with possible opposition or other political consequences.

Enlisting key stakeholders in the early planning and design phases of reform can create a powerful coalition to effectively promote comprehensive, systemic change by providing political support and needed resources. .

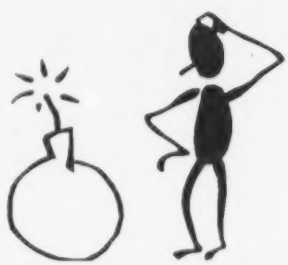
In order to accommodate stakeholders' interests and to respond to their concerns, they first must be identified and assessed. To facilitate this, a map of stakeholders should be developed that includes all stakeholders: internal to the system, external, supportive and adversarial (Roberts & King, 1989).

Then, how the organization will accommodate stakeholders' interests will need to be addressed. Also, a strategy for gaining the support and involvement of stakeholders will need to be developed. This may require the adjustment of the objectives and priorities for the reform effort. Should there be competing interests among stakeholders, these will have to be reconciled.

The outcome for this process is to develop an integrated strategy for engaging stakeholders in the planning and design of school reform and promoting *buy-in*. By reconciling and accommodating stakeholder interests, the likelihood that reformers will be *blind sided* by unsupportive stakeholders is reduced, and as a result, the probability of successful implementation and attainment of reform objectives is increased.

What are Stakeholders Concerned About?

Once all key stakeholders have been identified, the stakes for each—what each may gain or lose, should be identified. The stakes may be economic, political, social, or psychological. They may be tangible—money, staff, facilities—or intangible—authority, time, prestige.



To determine stakeholders' concerns in relation to the proposed reform, the following questions can be asked:

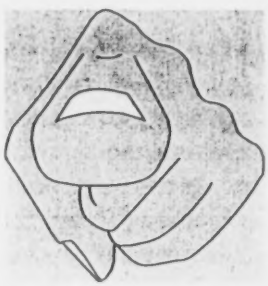
- *What does the individual/group have to lose as a result of the changes in policies, programs, or practices?*
- *What does the individual/group have to gain as a result of the changes in policies, programs, or practices?*
- *What are the expectations of external, regulatory groups that must be met?*

Pro-active negotiations with stakeholders, particularly external ones, to integrate and reconcile their interests with the priorities and goals for the reform will enable leaders to establish an integrated reform strategy that is much less likely to be undermined by the lack of involvement of key staff, e.g., administrators, teachers, or lack of political support by external groups in the environment, e.g., unions, parents, special interest groups, professional associations.

Part I

Developing Political Support

Step 1: Identify Key Stakeholders



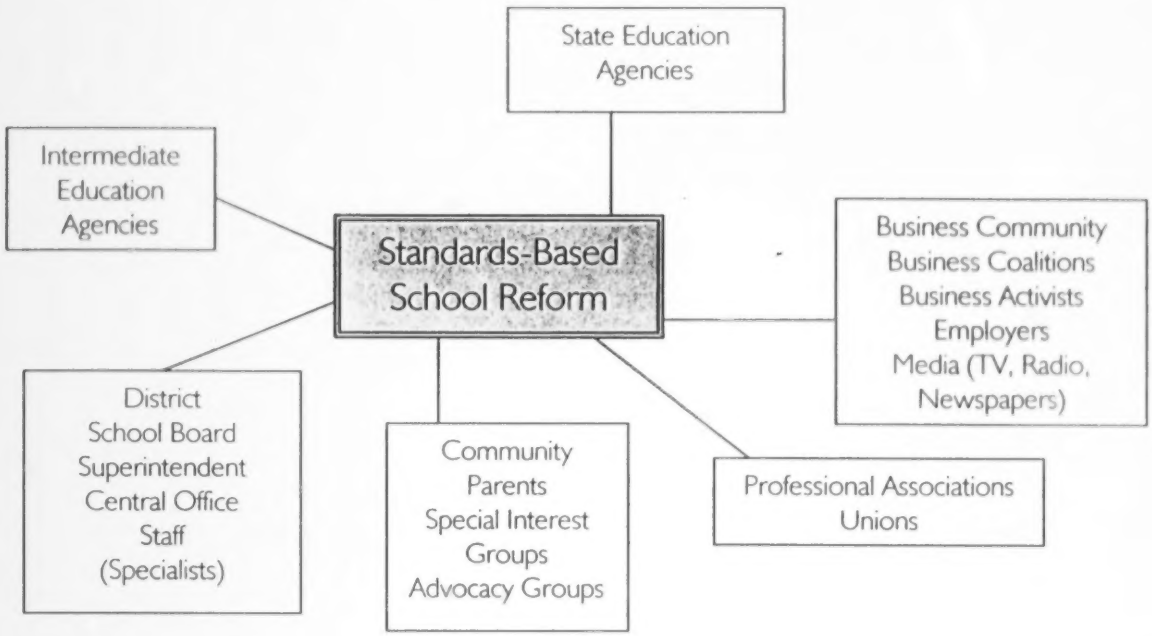
The first step in managing stakeholders is to identify them. Reform leaders should meet and attempt to identify all the individuals and groups: (a) who will be affected by the changes, (b) who have an interest in the policies, programs, or practices that will be changed, or (c) who control needed resources (e.g., staff, facilities, funds). Who the key stakeholders are will vary depending upon the focus of the reform effort or the types of changes that will be made, i.e., in policies, programs, or practices.

Construct a map, or diagram, that includes all the stakeholders, both those individuals and groups within the school system (district and school) and those external to the system, for example: school board members, special interest groups in the community, parents, professional groups and unions.

Once all the stakeholders have been identified, then the importance of their support or involvement should be assessed. A quick tally of how many key stakeholders are supportive of the reform effort and whether those whose support is essential are pro-reform will help reform leaders determine whether they have sufficient support to successfully implement the required changes.

If it is determined that sufficient support is not currently available from those whose support is essential, then reform leaders will need to take actions to gain their support.

Example of a Stakeholder Map for A Standards-Based School Reform Effort



Step 2: Recruit Key Stakeholders

Identify which key stakeholders are currently involved in the planning process. A key stakeholder is someone who has control over or access to needed political support, funds, staff, facilities, and/or resources or whose involvement is necessary for planning and development tasks to progress.

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Identify which key stakeholders are not currently involved in the planning process. Planning and development tasks may proceed without the active involvement of all key stakeholders; however, progress may be slower. Efforts should continue to be made to recruit all key stakeholders, because planning and development efforts might continue to be hampered if certain stakeholders are not involved (resulting in limitations in needed support, staff, or other resources).

Develop a strategy to recruit or to involve those key stakeholders whose involvement is crucial to successful innovation to occur. This will ensure that the reform effort is endorsed by all influential groups who can facilitate the implementation of innovations.

Key stakeholders may not hold positions of authority within the school system but may be respected, influential members of a group that should be involved in the reform effort. Within organizations (in the district office and in schools), leadership is shared between those with formal authority and those who form the informal support system, that is, the natural leaders who have influence within organizations by virtue of their experience and expertise. These representatives of the informal support system should be included as key stakeholders.

Develop a role for key stakeholders, that is, clearly define their responsibilities for the planning, development, and implementation of tasks and performance expectations. Their continued involvement will ensure that the reform effort is endorsed by all influential groups.

Step 3: Identify a Champion

Identify an influential stakeholder who can serve as a champion for the innovation effort and will provide the leadership and direction that is needed for successful planning and implementation. Ideally, this individual will be able to bring much of the needed authority and control over staff and other resources needed to move the planning, development and implementation tasks forward. [A good candidate for a champion is a high ranking administrator who has considerable authority in the district or who holds a position that is central to the innovation and who has access to needed staff, facilities, and/or other resources.

Develop a strategy to recruit or to involve a champion or several champions if multiple champions would help to facilitate the planning and development tasks.

Develop a clearly defined role and responsibilities for the champion(s) during the planning, development, and implementation stages and performance expectations.

Step 4: Identify major problems

In order for the reform or improvement effort to eventually have a measurable effect on student outcomes, it must be designed to target a major problem area or area(s) in need of improvement. Discussion among key stakeholders about problem areas that need to be addressed should promote "buy in" as well as to allow them to voice concerns about past efforts that failed and to plan strategically so that obstacles can be overcome.

Open discussions about what the major problems or needs are within a district are useful not only because they provide a forum for district and school staff to compare concerns and perspectives, but also because they provide some indication of their "readiness to change," i.e., to address particular problems or needs.

Once a list of major problems have been identified, then the group of key stakeholders need to rank them in terms of their priority, i.e., identify those that have the highest priority and should be addressed first. At this state in the planning process, it would be advisable to try to obtain data or other documentation (to support the opinions of stakeholders) to provide more objective information about the significance and scope of each problem or need identified. A particular problem or need might have high visibility (and be listed) by a stakeholder because it is within their area of expertise or interest, but should not be a target for reform because it does not affect many teachers and/or students, and consequently would not have widespread impact. [See Section 3 for a method of assessing the scope of a particular problem identified]

Obtaining objective information needed to assess the significance and scope of each problem or need identified does not have to be costly or time consuming. A variety of methods, including review of performance data or other records and documents or focus group discussions about current policies and practices can quickly produce information that is more objective than self-report data from one source. Combining information from multiple sources results in information acquired from a less objective source to be corroborated by a more objective source.

Step 5: Verify and prioritize problems & needs

Once the major problems or needs have been identified, then data or additional information should be collected to objectively verify which problems or needs are of sufficient scope or severity that they should be the focus of innovation/reform.

To determine which problems or needs should be designated as high priority issues, consider the following factors:

- How many individuals (e.g., teachers, students) are affected by the targeted problem or whose needs are not being adequately met?
- How many individuals (e.g., teachers, students) potentially would benefit by the changes in policies, programs, or practices that might be implemented as part of the innovation (reform)?
- How serious are the political, social, or educational implications of not addressing a particular problem or unmet need?
- If the innovation/reform is mandated by the state, what are the consequences of not complying with state-mandated changes in district policies, programs, or practices (i.e., how severe are the sanctions that might be imposed or how substantial the benefits that might be lost)?

Estimating the Scope of a Problem or Need

If numerical data are available, it might be helpful to do the following simple computations to determine the scope of the problem/need and the subsequent extent of the benefits that will be achieved (positive outcomes) if the innovation/reform is successful.

How many individuals/groups are affected by the problem/need?

_____ = # (individuals/groups) affected

What proportion of the total district population (individuals/groups) would benefit from the innovation/reform?

(individuals/groups) affected ÷ total # (individuals/groups) x 100
= _____ % who benefit

The greater percentage, the greater significance of the problem or need, and the higher priority it should be given. As part of the process for verifying whether, then priorities will need to be established. It is important to build consensus among key stakeholders to ensure adequate "buy in" is generated. Without "buy in," key stakeholders might withhold needed support and/or resources or comply at a minimum level with required changes, rather than being actively engaged and promoting the involvement of those staff and groups under their supervision.

It is not unusual for a district to select a reform model or begin developing innovative strategies without clarifying its problems and needs. Without clarifying needs and the severity and scope of problems, it is unlikely that appropriate reforms/innovations will be implemented that are designed to remedy a district's most serious instructional problems. Open discussion among district and school staff about district problems/needs and the collection of corroborating evidence increases the likelihood that reform(s)/innovation(s) implemented will be linked to the targeted problems/needs and the likelihood that they eventually will produce the desired outcomes.

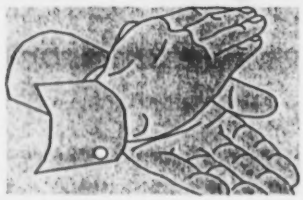
Address Concerns of Stakeholders and Justify Selection of Particular Problems and/or Needs

Step 6: Identify predisposing conditions and enabling factors.

Reviewing past reform efforts is a good method of getting key stakeholders to discuss and to clarify their concerns about reforms that they are considering. It also provides an opportunity to identify conditions and factors that stalled prior reform efforts, thereby alerting district and school staff to the need to develop strategies to resolve or circumvent them so that innovations can be successfully implemented.

If a district has not engaged in prior reform efforts to remedy targeted problems/needs, a review of related research that has examined the impact of reforms designed to remedy a targeted problem would provide useful information about predisposing conditions and enabling factors that might affect similar reform efforts implemented in your district. Careful consideration should be given to the conditions under which a particular innovation was previously implemented, the resources and expertise required, and the characteristics of the student populations, since these probably contributed to successful implementation in some way. If there is too much variation between the targeted problem/need, predisposing conditions, enabling factors, and student characteristics in districts where the reform approach was field tested and those in your district, it is less likely that the same positive outcomes will be achieved.

Step 7: Identify benefits, needs, and expectations for key stakeholders



To promote "buy in" on the part of key stakeholders, it is helpful to identify how various different groups will benefit from the reform effort or how it will promote their concerns or interests. Identifying benefits for stakeholders will help to gain support from those stakeholder groups that are not initially supportive of the reform effort.

Clarifying key stakeholders' expectations at this stage will facilitate the development of goals and measurable objectives for the reform effort. These expectations should be reviewed during discussions about resources that will be needed to implement the reforms. Expectations may have to be modified if sufficient resources are not available to support full implementation of reforms.

OVERVIEW

Scanning the Environment

What does it mean to Scan the Environment?

The environment of an organization refers to all the influences that are external to the organization itself (Pfeffer, 1982, 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In the case of schools, the environment includes the community, the district, and those state and Federal agencies that have regulatory control over the public K-12 system. It is important for school leaders to be aware of the state of the school system's environment, because a number of influential stakeholders are located externally to the system and often needed resources and expertise come from external regulatory agencies.

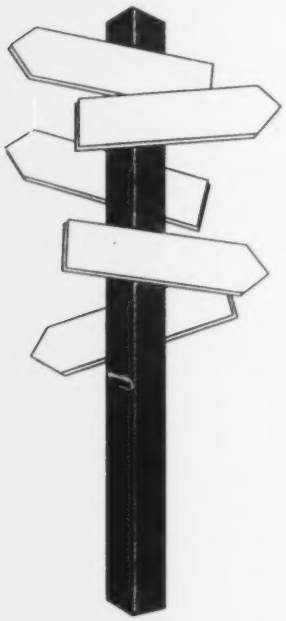
The decisions and actions of both district and school leaders are affected by regulatory agencies and other political influences in their environment. Their ability to implement policies and to manage their staff is affected by federal and state regulatory agencies, pressure from politically influential groups and individuals within their communities (e.g., unions, school board members), as well as the lack of support from key stakeholders, such as parents. They also need to be aware of any changes in the political conditions in their community, as the concerns of influential groups or individuals may change over time and their support of administrative policies and programs may decline. Lack of support from key stakeholders can undermine the successful implementation of ongoing policies and programs, as well as new interventions. Also, increased external reuglation and changes in Federal and state regulations can reduce the latitude district and school leaders can exercise over their policies, programs, and practices. District and school leaders must make critical decisions about how to respond to external mandates and to incorporate them into the existing infrastructure without disrupting ongoing programs and processes.

In additon to monitoring political conditions and stakeholders' support, school leaders should monitor the external environment periodically, because it is a source of needed resources. It is critical that they be aware of any fluctuations in the availability of resources, so that lack of resources does not hamper implementation of ongoing policies, programs, and services or new ones. Monitoring changes in the composition of their communities will alert school leaders to the need to modify programs and services to match the needs of new cohorts of students. Failure to modify programs and services to the entering skill levels and needs of students can result in a deterioration of their effect on student outcomes, or in the case of new interventions, failure to achieve anticipated outcomes.

Uncertainty in the level of political support, available resources and staff expertise, and the needs of new cohorts of students makes it difficult for district and school leaders to provide effective programs and services to students. Monitoring the environment on a regular basis can help district and school leaders anticipate changes in the level of needed support and the availability of resources and staff and then to make appropriate adjustments to ongoing policies, programs, and services. For those district and school leaders who are involved in designing and implementing reforms or innovative programs,

gauging the availability of needed support and resources is a critical step in the planning process. Should needed support or resources not be readily available, then appropriate strategies can be developed to obtain them.

Scanning the environment refers to a process of identifying key stakeholders and other external influential forces that are capable of exerting pressure on an organization's operations, assessing their expectations or mandates (in the case of regulatory agencies), and then analyzing how these expectations or requirements will affect the organization (Pfeffer, 1982; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).



School leaders need to regularly assess the environment so that they can take into account how current and emerging conditions might affect the school system. In the case of school reform, those leading the effort will want to scan the school system's environment to assess:

- key stakeholder support
- the availability of needed resources
- the availability of needed expertise
- the changes in the characteristics of students.

In addition to analyzing how the expectations or Federal or state mandates might be accomodated, school leaders should brainstorm about how reforms can be successfully implemented under different conditions: if all the needed political support, resources, and expertise are available; if the needed political support, resources, and expertise is limited; if particular critical political support, resources, or expertise is not available.

Why is it important to Scan the Environment?

It is important for reform leaders to initially scan their school system's environment to assess:

- the level of support from key stakeholders,
- the availability of needed resources
- the availability of needed technical expertise, and
- changes in the characteristics of new students.

By taking into account the difference between the ideal conditions for implementation of reforms (i.e., the optimal level of political support, resources, expertise) and the actual conditions, the appropriate adjustments or strategies can be initiated to ensure that the reforms are implemented to the degree that the potential benefits are achieved.

The implementation of newly-developed or changes in policies, programs, and practices reform is only the first stage of successful reform. These new or modified policies, programs, and practices must be maintained over time in order for the desired outcomes (e.g., improved teacher or student performance) to be sustained. To sustain desired outcomes, the changes must be institutionalized, that is, they must become part of the school system's infrastructure and environmental conditions and the impact of reforms regularly monitored.

Conditions in the environment are subject to change over tiem. Consequently, reform leaders need to periodically scan the environment to detect changes in political support, availability of needed resources and expertise, and the needs of students. Without being aware of changes in needed resources, local expertise,needs of students, or other changes that might affect the implementation or maintenance of changes that are central to the reform, appropriate adjustments will not be made, and as a consequence, the impact of the reform effort may deteriorate.

What needs to be assessed when Scanning the Environment?

A number of factors need to be assessed prior to initiating reform and then at regular intervals during the implementation and maintenance stages. These include:

- stakeholder support
- predisposing conditions
- enabling factors

Following the assessment of stakeholder support, predisposing conditions, and enabling factors that night affect implementation, then action plans can be developed to ensure that the needed support, resources, and expertise needed to successfully implement changes are acquired and that conditions are modified to make them more favorable toward change.

How can additional support and resources be acquired?

Most organizations have resources, including funds, facilities, staff time, that are not fully utilized. Often, these untapped resources can be reallocated to support a new initiative, such as a school reform effort. During the process of identifying the resources that are needed to fully and successfully implement a reform effort, untapped resources that could be redirected to support the reform effort should be identified also.

Stakeholders should be expected to demonstrate their commitment by contributing their support, time, and resources to the reform effort. While there is always competition for resources and a reluctance to share resources, identifying *untapped resources* will help to promote the reallocation of resources. By focusing on identifying *untapped* assets, capacities, and the individual abilities, avoids the impression that there are unresolvable obstacles and deficiencies, which could lead to a deterioration

of existing support. Discussions with stakeholders should emphasize the resources that they can contribute.

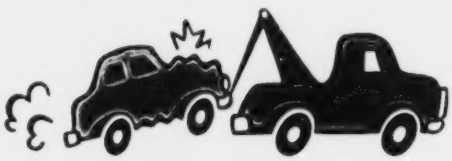
One of the outcomes of the process of identifying key stakeholders should be the establishment of a coalition of influential stakeholders that can assist with the planning and implementation of the reform effort. Such a group can provide critical political support to counter the opposition of other stakeholders. Also, building a cooperative relationship with stakeholders who control resources can facilitate their acquisition, and they can exert their influence over other decision-makers and external groups.

Part 2

Identifying Predisposing Conditions & Enabling Factors

Prior to designing and implementing innovations, it is helpful to **diagnose** existing environmental and organizational conditions that might promote or hamper reform efforts. Key stakeholders should be familiar with conditions within the district and schools and community-school relations, and should be able to provide an accurate assessment of how favorable local conditions are toward change.

Step 8A: Identify conditions and factors that will be obstacles to change.
Step 8B: Identify conditions and factors that will promote success.



In order to avoid reform efforts from being stalled by unfavorable conditions, the environmental and organizational situations should be analyzed to identify any circumstances that will promote or hamper the implementation of innovations. If there is an absence of favorable conditions and enabling factors, a district's readiness to change should be considered low. When local conditions are not sufficiently supportive of change, then district and school staff can develop strategies to create more favorable conditions

The two dimensions of a district's readiness to change that should be assessed are:

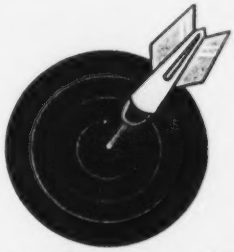
- Predisposing Conditions – political, economic, and administrative conditions in the district, community, and schools, e.g., availability of resources, political support from district office, policies;

- Enabling Factors – characteristics of staff that might affect development and implementation of innovations, e.g., expertise, commitment, attitudes; characteristics of students, e.g., heterogeneity of skills, motivation.

Careful consideration should be given to developing strategies to promote predisposing conditions and enabling factors prior to attempting to implement innovations. Lack of critical predisposing conditions, such as, availability of adequate resources, staff development to enhance staff expertise, or lack of administrative support, can make implementation of innovations much more difficult and reduce the benefits to the point that they do not justify the resources allocated for implementation.

Just as certain conditions and factors will promote successful implementation of innovations, certain factors will hamper implementation. These might include: low levels of commitment from key stakeholders or groups (e.g., teachers), negative attitudes toward change, competition or conflict among existing system policies and practices with new ones, lack of staff development to familiarize staff with new procedures and methods and build needed expertise, coordination problems, lack of resources and facilities, and active or passive community resistance. Strategies will need to be developed to avoid or overcome these and other potential obstacles to reform.

Step 9: Identify needed resources.



The resources needed to fully implement a reform effort should be estimated: funding, staff, materials, facilities and time. Lack of adequate resources and time to fully implement reforms often results in an insufficient level of implementation which in turn results in a failure to achieve desired outcomes.

Estimate the staff resources that will be needed to adequately support the reform effort; these might include: involvement of district staff and school staff, technical expertise, staff development to promote acquisition of new knowledge and skills, additional staff, reallocation of responsibilities or redefinition of roles.

Estimate the facilities and materials that will be needed; also consider the following factors: the availability of existing facilities, the need to modify existing ones or to procure additional facilities, and the need to purchase materials or to develop new materials, if appropriate ones are not available.

Estimate the budgetary implications of the reform effort.

Estimate the time that will be required to fully implement the reform effort. The time frame for implementing reforms has important implications for budgeting, staffing, and the availability and cost of other needed resources.

The availability of sufficient resources to support full implementation of innovations is so crucial that estimates of key resources should be taken into account even during the early planning stage when the focus and goals for the reform effort are being developed. The innovations developed and implemented must fit within budgetary constraints. They can be scaled down if sufficient resources are not available and more modest reform goals and objectives can be adopted. However, consideration should be given to what the threshold level is for the innovation(s), that is, what minimum level of implementation is needed in order for a minimally adequate level of impact to be achieved.

Step 10: Identify untapped resources and other sources

Most organizations have resources that are not fully utilized. These untapped resources can be reallocated to support the development and implementation of innovations.

While resources may be allocated to support a particular reform effort (e.g., special federal or state funds), they may not be sufficient to support full implementation. Because there may be a need for additional resources as reform progresses, it is worth trying to identify untapped resources that can be used to implement the reform effort, including: funding, staff, materials, and facilities.

Step 11: Identify strategies to create predisposing conditions.

Should the diagnosis of existing environmental and organizational conditions reveal that few predisposing conditions and enabling factors exist that could support reform efforts, then stakeholders should try to develop strategies to promote more favorable conditions for reform.

Successful reform usually requires the active involvement and political support of key stakeholders. Their assistance at this point in the planning process is crucial, because they will not only be able to generate political support for reform, but they also will have to ensure that needed resources are made available for the reform effort

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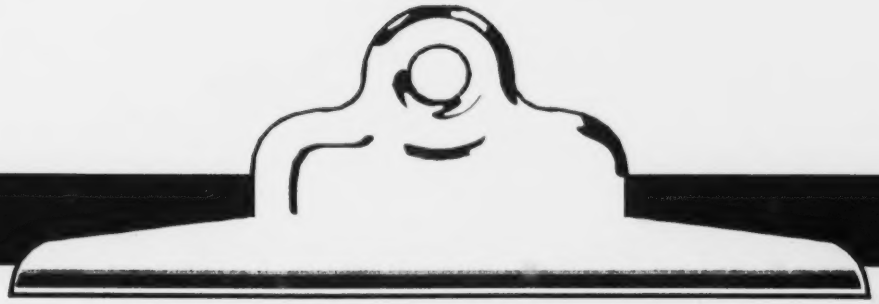
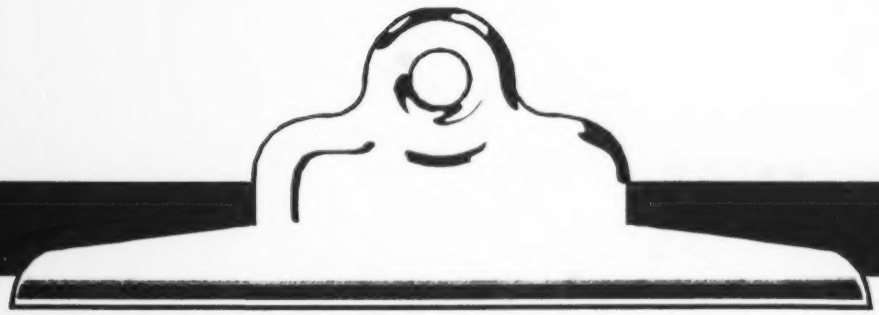


Developing Political Support: Planning Tools

The following section contains planning tools that district and school staff can use to guide discussions during the first phase of designing school reforms or innovations. These tools contain key questions that will need to be answered and identify critical information that will need to be collected in order for appropriate decisions to be made about the reform/innovation. The tools will guide district and school staff through the process of making well-informed decisions and will help them to accomplish the following:

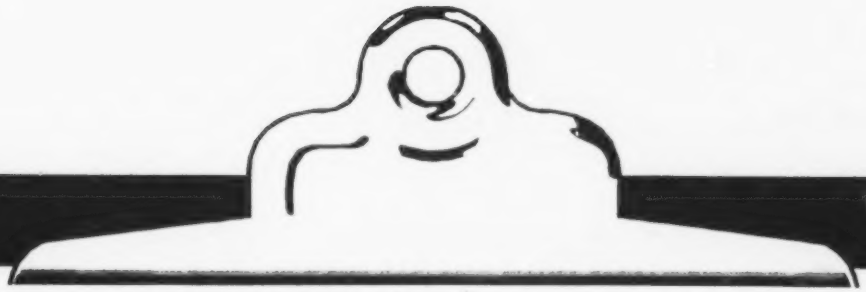
- Step 1. Identify Key Stakeholders
- Step 2. Recruit Key Stakeholders
- Step 3. Identify a Champion
- Step 4. Identify Major Problems
- Step 5. Verify and Prioritize Problems
- Step 6. Identify Predisposing Conditions and Enabling Factors
- Step 7. Identify Benefits, Needs, and Expectations for Key Stakeholders



Step 1: Identify Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder Support Score Card

Stakeholder Name	Importance of their Support				Will they be:	
	Essential	Important	Helpful	Not Needed	Pro?	Con?
At the district: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.						
At the school: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.						
In the community: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.						
Other professional groups or agencies: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.						
TOTAL =						



Step 2: Recruit Key Stakeholders

Who are the key stakeholders needed to ensure success?

a. Key decision makers: _____

_____

b. Key agencies: _____

_____

c. Key special interest groups: _____

_____

Which key stakeholders are not currently involved?

a. Key decision makers: _____

_____

b. Key agencies: _____

_____

c. Key special interest groups: _____

_____

How will missing stakeholders be recruited?

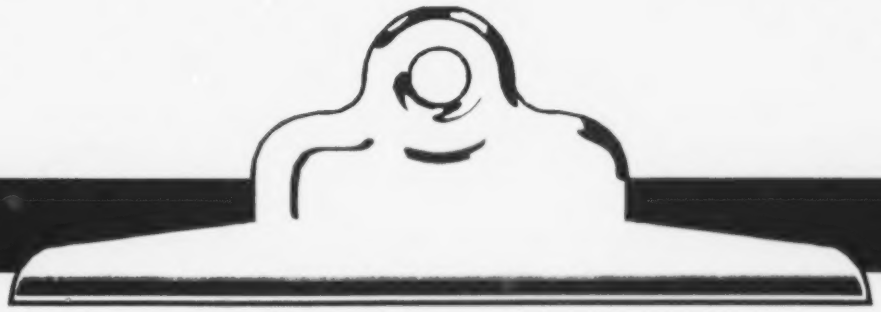
a. Key decision makers: _____

_____

b. Key agencies: _____

_____

c. Key special interest groups: _____



What will each stakeholder bring to this innovation process (i.e., political support, staff, funds, facilities, or other resources)?

Stakeholder (individual/group/agency)	Contribution(s)

What are the performance expectations for stakeholders (i.e., what will be provided, at what level, and for what period of time)?

Stakeholder (individual/group/agency)	Expectation(s)

Step 3: Identify a Champion

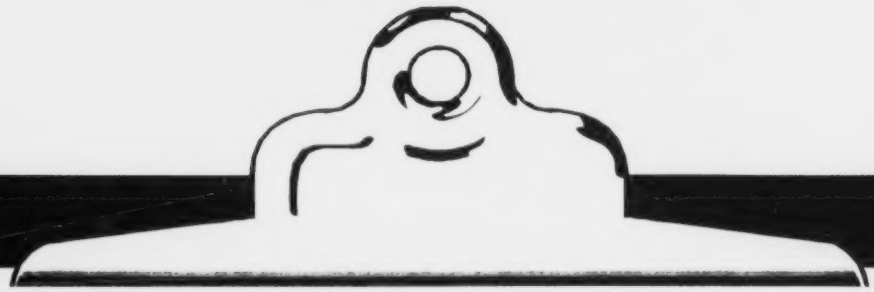
Who would be an influential champion for this effort?

a. Identify a champion from each key agency:

b. Identify a champion from each key special interest group:

Which champions are not currently involved?

How will needed champions be recruited?

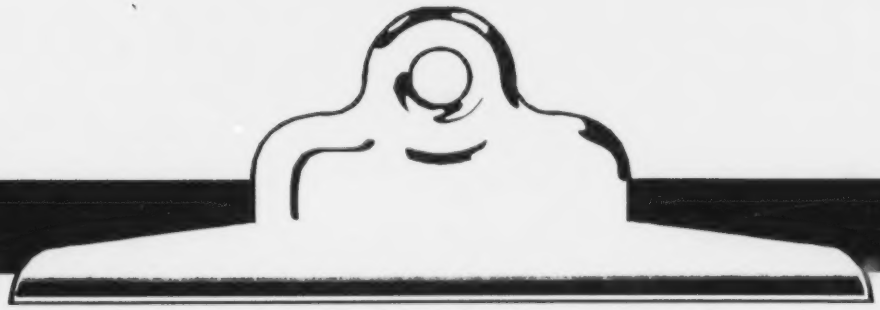


Step 4: Identify major problems and needs

What are the major problems and needs that should be addressed? (identify 1-5 major problems)

What evidence or data is available that documents the significance or scale of the problem(s) and need(s) identified?

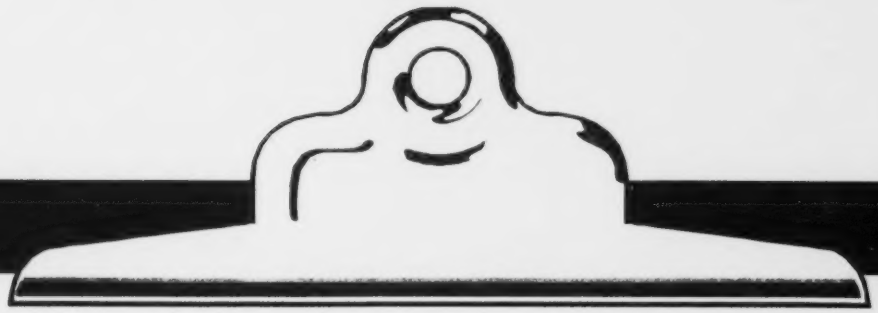
Identify additional evidence or data that is needed to document significance or scale of each problem/need identified (data should be obtained and reviewed).



Step 5: Verify and prioritize problems & needs

Which identified problems and needs have the highest priority based on their significance or scale? (Prioritize problems based on documented importance and/or severity)

Develop a sequence and target dates for addressing each of the identified problems.



Step 6: Identify predisposing conditions and enabling factors

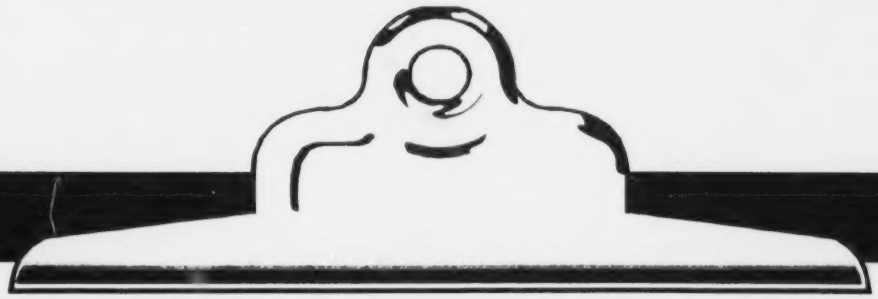
List below strategies for improvement or reform which have been previously implemented.

For each implemented strategy, identify the result (e.g., extent of implementation, outcomes, obstacles to success).

Step 7: Identify benefits, needs and expectations for key stakeholders.

For each problem identified, list the benefits to key stakeholders and/or existing needs that would be met by a reform/improvement initiative designed to resolve the problem.

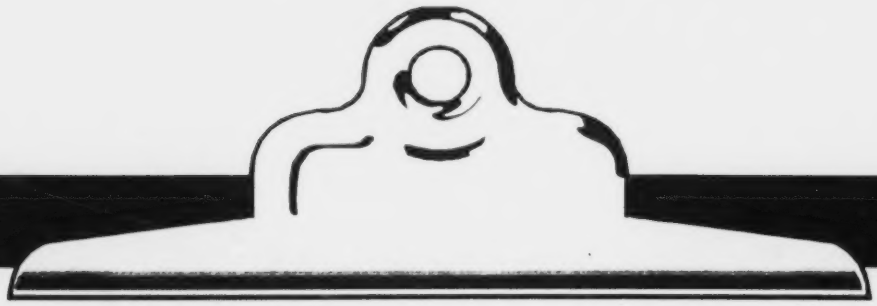
For each problem, list the expectations of the stakeholder(s) requiring/promoting this reform initiative (i.e., desired ends, outcomes).



Identifying Predisposing Conditions & Enabling Factors

The following section contains planning tools that district and school staff can use to guide discussions about conditions and factors that will facilitate or hamper the development and implementation of large-scale reform efforts or innovations that target a specific problem. These tools contain key questions that will need to be answered and identify critical information that will need to be collected in order for appropriate decisions to be made about the reform/innovation. The tools will guide district and school staff through the process of making well-informed decisions and will help them to accomplish the following:

- Step 8a. Identify conditions and factors that will hamper change
- Step 8b. Identify conditions and factors that will promote change
- Step 9. Identify needed resources
- Step 10. Identify untapped resources and other sources
- Step 11. Identify strategies to create predisposing conditions.



Step 8a: Identify conditions and factors that will be obstacles to change.

What are the major obstacles that will need to be resolved? (These might include detractors, lack of needed resources or expertise)

_____

_____

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What factors or conditions caused similar reform efforts to fail in the past?

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Identify strategies that can be sued to resolve these obstacles.

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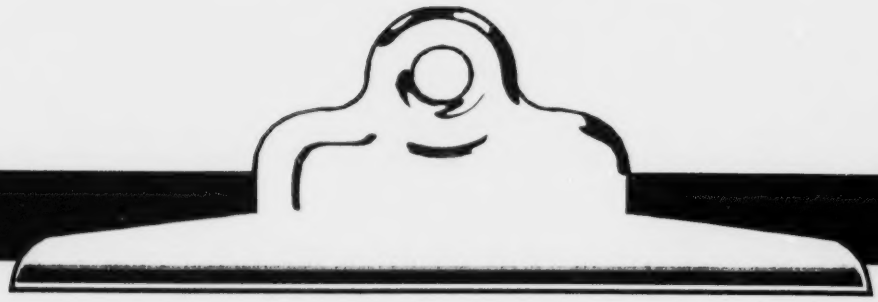

Step 8b: Identify conditions and factors that will promote success.

What are the major factors that promoted the success of other reform efforts in the past?

_____

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Which of these enabling factors currently exist and will facilitate success of this effort?

_____

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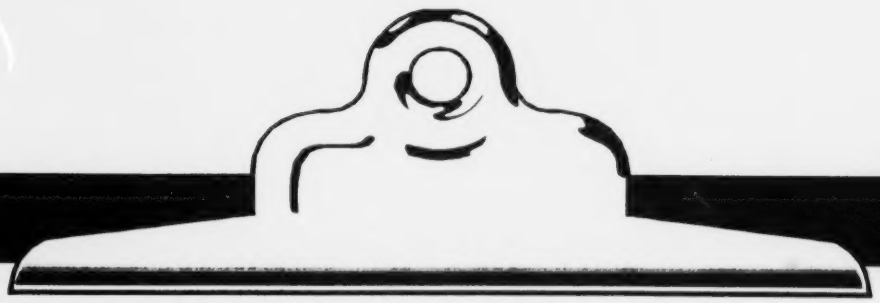

Step 9: Identify needed resources.

What resources will be needed to support this effort?

a. Staff: _____

b. Technical expertise: _____

c. Materials: _____

d. Facilities: _____

e. Funds: _____

f. Other resources: _____

Which of these needed resources are available (e.g., identify sources)?

_____

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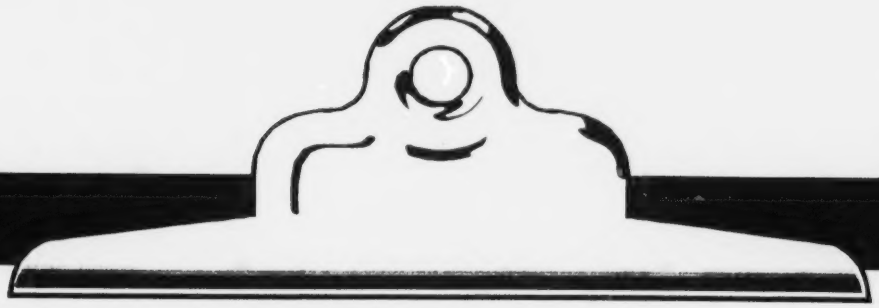


Step 10: Identify untapped resources and other sources.

What untapped resources could be reallocated to support this effort?

a. Staff: _____

b. Technical expertise: _____

c. Materials: _____

d. Facilities: _____

e. Funds: _____

f. Other resources: _____

What other steps need to be taken to obtain additional resources?

_____

_____

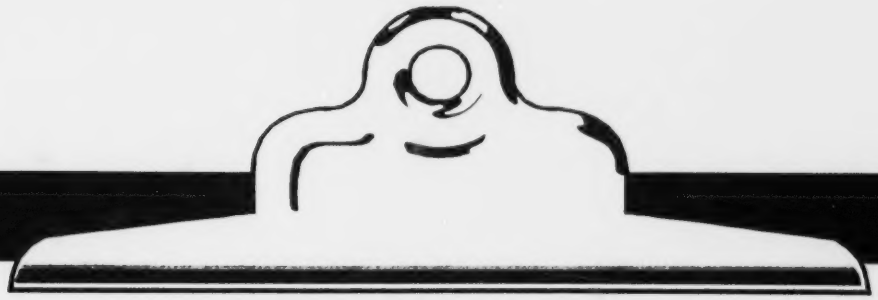
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____



Step 11: Identify strategies to create predisposing conditions.

What can be done to increase the enabling conditions and enabling factors at the district level that will promote this reform effort?

What can be done to increase the enabling conditions and enabling factors at the school level that will promote this reform effort?

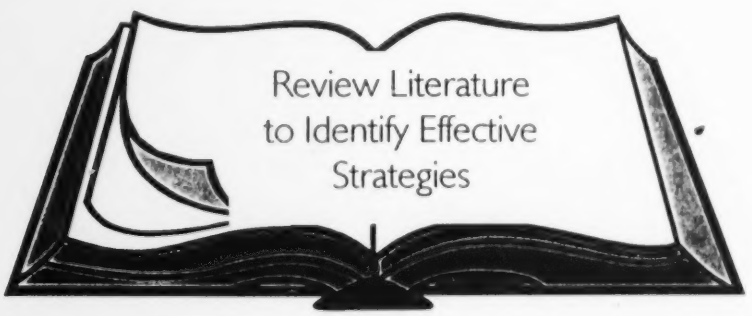
What can be done to increase the enabling conditions and enabling factors within the community that will promote this reform effort?

Part 3

Focusing Stakeholders and Planning for Change

The process of engaging key stakeholders in the reform effort (detailed in this document) should result in a list of problems and needs that should be targeted for change. These problems/needs will need to be prioritized based on objective criteria that provide a relative ordering in terms of their significance, scope, and severity. By comparing the identified problem(s)/need(s) and placing them within the district context, their potential impact on the student outcomes of concern can be evaluated. Some problems/needs might merit attention; however, if only a small proportion of students will benefit from changes in policies, programs, or practices, or the effect size for a particular innovation is likely to be modest, then the overall impact on desired student outcomes will be relatively small. [Note: For convenience, the term "intervention" will be used throughout this section to refer to a systemic reform effort that includes changes in policies, programs, and practices, as well as specific innovative programs or instructional practices.]

Other factors, such as resources required, difficulty of developing and implementing needed changes, and level of administrator and teacher support, will need to be considered; however, the simple exercise of quantifying the importance of a problem/need illustrates the potential political and educational impact that will result from resolution of existing problems or addressing unmet needs. District and school staff will need to exercise their professional judgment to decide whether political considerations should take precedence over educational factors when selecting the problem(s) or need(s) that will be targeted for change.



Examine the research and professional literature to identify policies, curricula, practices or other strategies that have been found to be effective in addressing the particular problem or need that your district is attempting to remedy. The likelihood of successful improvement is

increased by adopting and/or adapting a proven approach that has been successfully implemented in other districts. Careful consideration should be given to the conditions under which the intervention was previously implemented, the resources and expertise required, and the characteristics of the student population, since these probably contributed to successful implementation in some way. If there is too much variation between the targeted problem/need, predisposing conditions, enabling factors, and student characteristics in districts where the intervention was field tested and t hose in your district, it is less likely that the same positive outcomes will be achieved.

Review the list of problems and/or areas that need improvement and give each a score for each of the following criteria, and then determine which problem(s) or need(s) should be targeted for immediate attention based on their political significance, scope, and severity.

Significance --the political and/or educational implications of not addressing a particular problem or unmet need; the consequences of not complying with state-mandated changes in district policies, programs, or practices (i.e., the severity of the sanctions that might be imposed or the loss of benefits);

Scope--the size of the population (e.g., teachers, students) that potentially would benefit by the changes in policies, programs, or practices that might be implemented as part of the intervention;

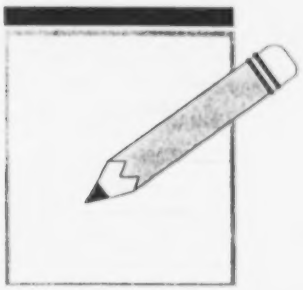
Severity—the size of the student population who are affected by the targeted problem or whose needs are not being adequately met and the vulnerability of the group(s) affected;

Priority—the relative importance of the identified problems/needs and the order in which they should be addressed based on consideration of the significance, scope, severity, and predisposing conditions and enabling factors.

Problem/Need	Significance☆	Scope☆	Severity☆	Total✳	Priority▲
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

☆ Rating: Low = 1, Medium = 2, High = 3.
✳ Calculating total: Add ratings for significance + scope + severity
▲ The problem/need with the highest total rating should be assigned the top priority, the one with the next highest rating assigned second priority, etc.

Identify Major Goals For the Intervention



All reform efforts, whether a large-scale, comprehensive set of strategies or a more narrowly-focused innovation, should have goals to guide the development of the new policies, programs, and/or practices. These will serve to focus the reform effort as well as the evaluation of the effects of any changes in policies, programs, and/or practices on ultimate outcomes, that is, student learning and performance levels. The process of prioritizing problems/needs based on objective criteria make it less likely that district and school staff will focus on *safe*, indirect changes that do not address core instructional problems or needs.

The development of goals demonstrates that the system as a whole is committed to change and clarifies key stakeholders' expectations for the intervention. This is important because implementing interventions will require changes at different levels in the school system (i.e., at the district, school, and classroom levels) and corresponding disruption for real school renewal to occur:

- Policies will have to be revised.
- Practices and actions will have to be redirected.
- Resources will have to be reallocated.
- Roles will have to be redefined and responsibilities reassigned.

The adoption of new goals and priorities to guide the reform effort is likely to create conflict and competition with previously established goals and priorities. District and school staff should attempt to integrate the new goals with existing ones: to determine which policies, programs, and practices should be changed and which should not. In addition, reform can be implemented incrementally to reduce disruption that might occur and to permit time for redirection and reallocation of staff and other resources.

Develop Measurable Objectives for the Intervention

For each goal, one or more measurable outcomes will need to be developed. The objectives for the reform effort should state *who is targeted to receive services, how much of each service they should receive*, or *what change in policy, program, or practice will be made* and *by when*. By stating expectations in this way, it can be readily determined whether they have been achieved. These measurable objectives provide performance standards, that is, what is considered an acceptable implementation level for each component of the intervention.

For objectives to effectively promote the desired changes, they must be meaningful, realistic, and measurable. Objectives need to be focused on a meaningful change, that is, they must produce something of value for schools, teachers, or students. If an intervention is being implemented in response to a Federal or state mandate, then it must address those problems and changes required by the state. In this situation, "meaningful" objectives are t hose which are focused on those outcomes that are determined by

the regulatory agency. In addition, objectives must be realistic; the changes targeted, whether changes in policies, programs, practices, or performance levels, must be capable of being achieved over the time period established by the regulatory agency or considered acceptable by the key stakeholders. And finally, objectives must be measurable. They must include numerical targets or specify the level of performance that is expected.

Hierarchies of objectives may be developed, which detail desired outcomes at various stages of implementation: process outcomes (immediate or intermediate changes) and ultimate outcomes (system-level impacts). Eventually, these also will be used to evaluate whether the intervention has achieved what it was designed to accomplish. The process outcomes can be evaluated during the early stages of implementation; however, the ultimate outcomes cannot be evaluated until after the intervention has been fully implemented and until a sufficient time has passed since full implementation to allow changes in policies, programs, or practices to produce measurable effects on student outcomes.

Develop Outcomes for the Intervention

Included in the objectives for the reform effort should be immediate and intermediate (process) outcomes, and longer-term ultimate outcomes for the various interventions that will be implemented (i.e., changes in policies, programs, practices, or delivery of new services or programs). Examples of these different types of outcomes include the following:

Standards-Based Reform

Immediate Outcomes
- *New policies*
- *Revised curriculum framework*
- *Revised standards*

Intermediate Outcomes
- *Aligned curriculum framework and assessments*
- *Consistent use of framework*
- *Consistent use of new instructional practices*

Ultimate Outcomes
- *Student achievement*
- *Student retention rates*
- *Student attrition rates*

Too often, process outcomes are used as the ultimate success indicators for an entire intervention. Process outcomes focus on completion of activities, delivery of services, or implementation of particular policies or programs, rather than on their impact on changes in student learning and performance levels for teachers and students. Process outcomes need to be monitored to assess whether sufficient change has occurred to justify evaluation of performance outcomes. However, the real impact of an intervention should be evaluated by measuring change in ultimate outcomes, actual improvements in student learning and performance levels that result from implementation of interventions.

Link Objectives with Components of an Intervention & Desired Outcomes

Once the goals and objectives for an intervention have been developed, the link between objectives and the components designed to produce the desired outcomes should be established. Like the *"active" ingredient* in medicine, these components are those critical parts of a multi-component, comprehensive reform effort (policies, practices, strategies, or activities) or features of an innovative program that are expected to produce the desired changes. Specifying this connection will identify those outcomes that are not likely to be attained because there is no specific policy, practice, strategy, activity, or programmatic feature that is designed to produce the targeted outcome. This helps to identify potential weaknesses in the overall design of the intervention; it should include a specific component designed to influence the targets of change and to produce all desired outcomes. Establishing these links also illustrates how an intervention achieves its goals and facilitates the development of evaluation questions focused on early and intermediate effects and ultimate outcomes.

Any given intervention can produce several types of outcomes: (1) immediate, (2) intermediate, and (3) ultimate outcomes. Immediate and intermediate outcomes usually occur a relatively short time after an intervention has been implemented. Ultimate outcomes require a longer period of time to elapse before the intervention is likely to have produced any measurable change. These outcomes may include changes in the organizational infrastructure (e.g., policies, programs, practices), changes of a technical nature (e.g., knowledge, skill levels, roles), and changes in personal characteristics of teachers and students (e.g., attitudes, motivation, level of effort). Immediate and intermediate outcomes need to be monitored to ensure that an intervention has been implemented with sufficient consistency and intensity that measurable improvements in ultimate outcomes can be expected. Positive changes in immediate and intermediate outcomes also can be used to justify continued support from stakeholders.

Identifying Evidence to Link the Component with the Desired Outcomes

To ensure that effective interventions are selected for implementation, i.e., those with the capability of producing the desired changes, it is good practice to review and assess evidence of effectiveness. Findings from well-designed research or evaluation studies constitutes the best evidence. If this is unavailable, evidence from field tests of programs or practices or case studies of implementation at other district or school sites should be examined. Without any evidence that the intervention has

produced outcomes at another district or school site, the likelihood that it will produce the desired changes in the targeted sites is questionable.

Develop Methods to Monitor Progress

To ensure that effective interventions are selected and implemented to the level that desired outcomes are produced, implementation must be monitored. Even in the early planning phase, it is important to begin to develop methods to monitor implementation of all components of the reform or innovation. This will facilitate the inclusion of monitoring procedures into the implementation. This also will encourage those responsible for implementing the components to self-monitor their efforts and to make informal, regular assessments of their progress toward full implementation of all components. Regular assessment of progress will allow them to make mid-course adjustments if problems are encountered as implementation proceeds. Since some key stakeholders may have access to information and data sources that can be used to monitor implementation, it is helpful to involve them in the development of monitoring procedures and the identification of sources of information and data.

Develop Evaluation Questions

The final step in engaging stakeholders is the identification of questions that they would like to have answered about the impact of the intervention. Regulatory Federal and state agencies may have specific outcomes they want the intervention to produce, and these expected outcomes should be incorporated into evaluation questions. Other stakeholders may be interested in the effects of the intervention or a particular component on specific groups of students or K-12 staff. Questions that address the concerns of stakeholders, in particular, regulatory agencies and funders, should be identified and later included in the evaluation plan that will assess the overall effectiveness of the interventions.

Link Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes With Components of the Reform Strategy:

LOGIC MODELS

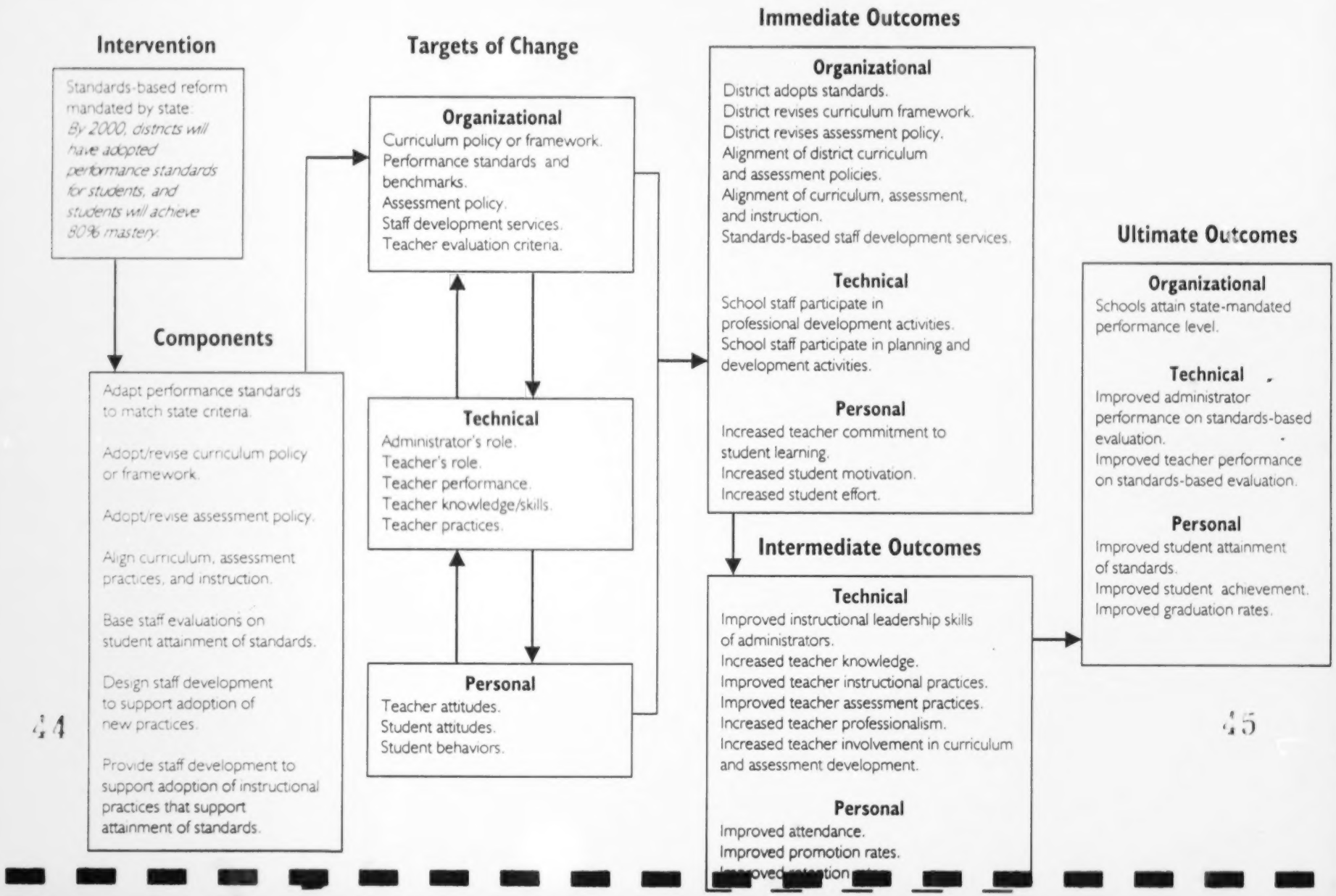
To ensure that the reform strategy has the capability of eventually producing a measurable effect on the desired ultimate outcomes, a close link between goals, objectives, and outcomes and components of the reform strategy.

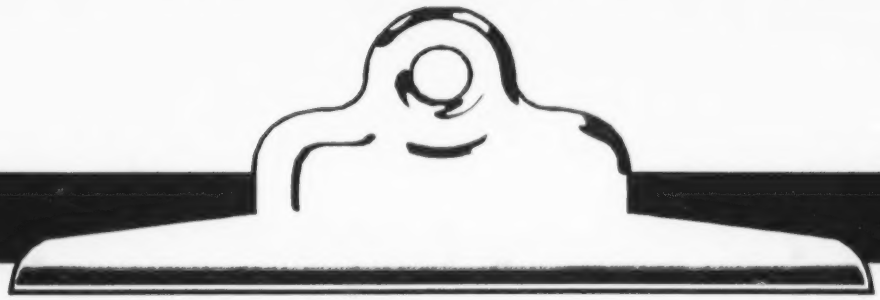
Evidence of the link between components and outcomes should already have been established. Developing a *logic model* will clearly illustrate the links between the major components of the reform strategy and goals, objectives, and desired outcomes.

A *logic model* details the conceptual (and in some cases empirical) link between the goals and objectives for a reform strategy with its component parts and the desired outcomes. During prior discussions, the goals and objectives for the reform effort should have been established by key stakeholders based on perceived needs and corroborated by objective sources of data and information. The link between components of the reform strategy and changes or desired outcomes reflected in objectives should have been established through a review of research and professional literature.

Developing a logic model illustrates the links between goals, objectives, components, and outcomes and is useful for development purposes and evaluation purposes. Once the links have been established, they can be graphically represented in a format similar to Figure 1.

Figure I. Logic Model for Systemic School Reform

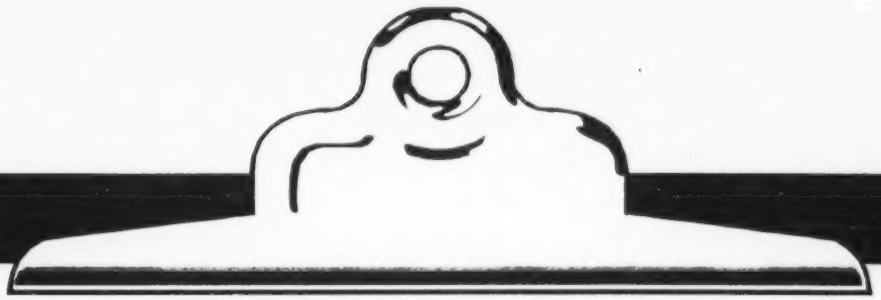




Focusing Stakeholders and Planning for Change

The following section contains planning tools that district and school staff can use to guide discussions about identified problems and needs and their significance and priority. These tools are intended to help district and school staff to focus on the most significant and severe problem and needs, and then to develop interventions that are directly linked to targeted problems or needs. A direct link between components of the reform/innovation and targeted problems/needs is essential in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The development of a logic model which requires district and school staff to explicitly identify the links between goals, program components, processes, and immediate/intermediate/ultimate outcomes will promote the design of interventions that will produce the desired performance outcomes. These tools will guide district and school staff through the process of designing appropriate interventions and will help them to accomplish the following:

- Step 1. Identify major goals
- Step 2. Identify measurable objectives for each goal
- Step 3. Identify components of the intervention and link to changes.
- Step 4. Identify link between components and outcomes
- Step 5. Identify method of monitoring progress
- Step 6. Identify evaluation questions



Step 1: Identify the goals for the intervention.

Goal 1: _____

_____

_____

_____

Goal 2: _____

_____

_____

_____

Goal 3: _____

_____

_____

_____

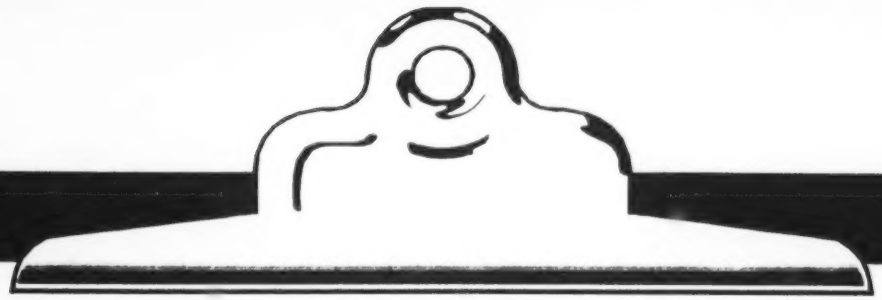
Goal 4: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Add additional ones as needed)



Step 2: Identify measurable objectives for each goal.

For each goal, identify one or more objectives (i.e., specific changes in policy, practice, or performance that can be measured).

Goal 1: _____

_____

Objective 1.1: _____

_____

Objective 1.2: _____

_____

Objective 1.3: _____

_____

Goal 2: _____

_____

Objective 2.1: _____

_____

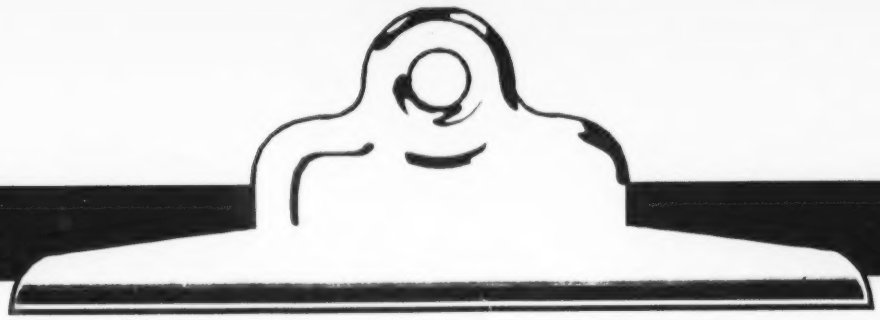
Objective 2.2: _____

_____

Objective 2.3: _____

_____

(Add additional ones as needed)



Step 3: For each objective, identify the component (e.g., revised/new policy, revised/new practice) that will be implemented to produce the desired change (e.g., improved practice, improved performance).

Objective 1: _____

_____

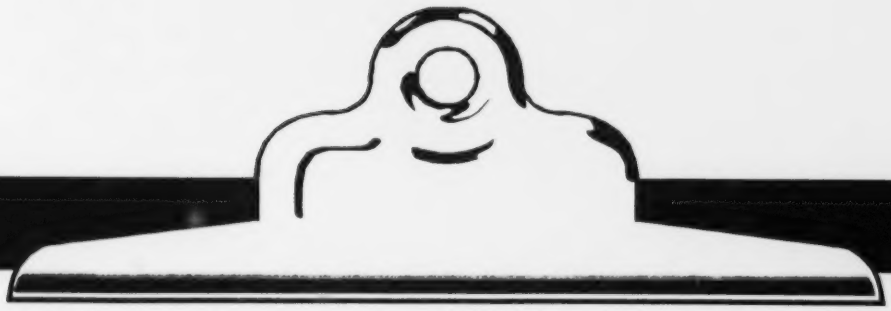
Related Component(s):	*Desired Outcome(s):*
1.1 _____	_____
_____	_____
1.2 _____	_____
_____	_____
1.3 _____	_____
_____	_____

Objective 2: _____

_____

Related Component(s):	*Desired Outcome(s):*
2.1 _____	_____
_____	_____
2.2 _____	_____
_____	_____
2.3 _____	_____
_____	_____

(Add additional ones as needed)



Step 4: What evidence exists that links a component with the desired outcome(s) (e.g., prior research, prior experience)?

Component 1: _____

_____

Evidence of link to desired outcome: _____

_____

_____

_____

Component 2: _____

_____

Evidence of link to desired outcome: _____

_____

_____

_____

Component 3: _____

_____

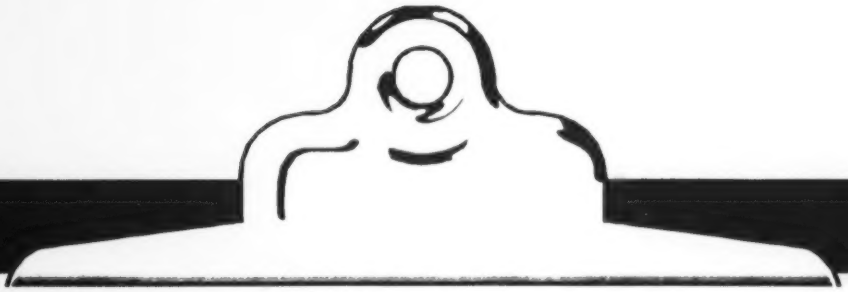
Evidence of link to desired outcome: _____

_____

_____

_____

(Add additional ones as needed)



Step 5: Identify method of monitoring progress toward implementing components of the intervention.

What method will be used to monitor progress toward implementing each component of the intervention?

What data will be collected, from whom, how, and at what time points?

Component 1: _____

Method of monitoring progress: _____

_____

_____

Data to be collected:	Source(s):	Time point(s):
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Component 2: _____

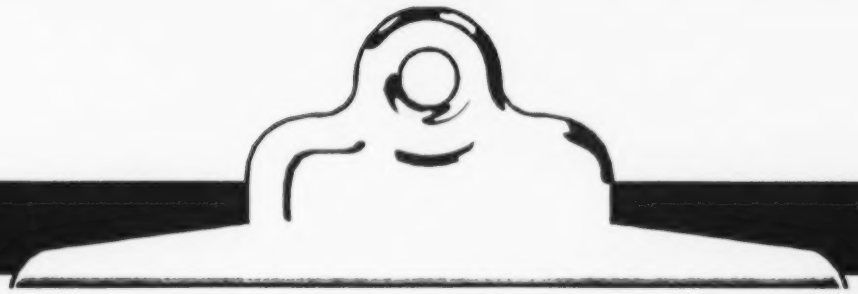
Method of monitoring progress: _____

_____

_____

Data to be collected:	Source(s):	Time point(s):
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(Add additional ones as needed)



Step 6: Identify questions that key stakeholders would like evaluators to answer about the impact of the intervention.

Component 1: _____

Questions about policies and practices:

_____

_____

Questions about school staff:

_____

_____

Questions about standards:

_____

_____

Questions about students:

_____

_____

Component 2: _____

Questions about policies and practices:

_____

_____

Questions about school staff:

_____

_____

Questions about students: _____

_____

(Add additional ones as needed)